(b) to (d) Orders in this regard were issued *vide* Office Memorandum No. 7(5)/E-Coord/2004 dated 24.9 2004 These orders prescribed guidelines on expenditure management-fiscal prudence and austerity which, *inter-alia,* include measures like all profits making PSEs to declare a minimum divided of 20% on equity or post tax profits; graded reduction of 5% per annum in the deficit grants given to autonomous bodies; prohibiting any deviations of expenditrue from the prescribed budgetary ceilings; a mandatory 10% cut in the budgetary allocations for non-plan non-salary expenditure as well as the expenditure on petrol/oil/lubricants and travel; ban on purchase of new vehicles; revision of non-tax receipts so as to ensure recovery of the cost of services, etc.

(e) Amount exceeding Rs. 2000 crores is expected to be mobilized by these measures.

Fiscal Deficit

†1984. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of percentage increase of fiscal deficit registered during the first half of the year 2004-05, alonwith the amount of total financial loss in thousand crore rupees during the first quarter of the financial year;

(b) the main reasons for increase in the said fiscal deficit;

(c) the measures being taken by Government to make up the same; and

(d) the details of comparative increase in the fiscal deficit of the whole year against the same registered during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) the Fiscal Deficit during the first quarter of the Financial Year was Rs. 41,681 crore and that in the first half of the current financial year was Rs. 53,235 crore, showing 27.7% increase over the fiscal deficit in the first quarter.

(b) and (c) Main reason for the increase in the fiscal deficit has been relatively slower growth in tax revenue collection compared to expenditure requirements of the Government. Detailed appraisal of various factors contributing to the increase in the fiscal deficit and the remedial measures

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

taken by the Government have been detailed in the Mid-Year Review presented in the Rajya Sabha on 13th December, 2004.

(d) The fiscal deficit was Rs. 1,45,072 crore in 2002-03, Rs. 1,32,103 crore as per Revised Estimates for 2003-04 and the Budget Estimate for the current year is Rs. 1,37,407 crore.

Delay in withdrawal of money in Union Bank , Azamgarh

†1985. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the depositors of Union Bank's branch Thekma Bazar, district Azamgarh (U.P.) have to wait for one and half or two hours for withdrawal of money after issue of tokens;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government would issue directives to ensure withdrawal of money without any delay;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (e) Union Bank of India has reported that their Thekma Branch handles approximately 100 payments per day and the average time taken for withdrawal is 15 to 20 minutes. Although no specific complaints for delayed payment has been received either at Regional Office level or at Central Office level, the concerned Branch Manager has been instructed to ensure that the payments should be made within the stipulated time-frame.

Retired Workers of Divested PSUs

†1986. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the Public Sector Undertakings which have been sold to private companies and the number of employees working in these undertakings at the time of the sale, undertaking-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.